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PRESIDENT'S CUM MILITARY RULE
BY
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The late Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru is reported to have said in Delhi on 25th July 1948:

> "I think it would be a sad day if people stop criticising and condemning those in authority, because without people strongly criticising and pointing out the errors of their ways, in authority people often go wrong. They get swollen headed and complacent. They think everything they do is right and everything else is wrong. That is the danger, even though they may be Congressmen. Therefore people in authority have to be checked and kept up to the mark.

Since the debate in the Parliament last month over an 'out-of-context' and incomplete report of a talk I gave informally to some Members of the press at Dhanbad on 8th March 1970, details of which were widely reported in the press, I have had numerous telegrams and letters, from friends in and out of India, everyone supporting my views.

There is a feeling in the minds of some of my friends that, after the debate when my statements were rather severely attacked by some, I had gone back on my stand. They also feel that I she should not have gone to see the Prime Minister, the Speaker of Lok Sabha and the Home Minister to apologise for what I had said.

In order to clear up the wrong impression created by incomplete press reports in the minds of my friends I have written this.

My going back on my statement:-

I have not gone back one inch. I stand by every word I said at Dhanbad but not as reported in the press. I stick to what I said then and what I have been saying all these years in regard to the President's cum Military Rule, scrapping the present Constitution, the too many political parties and Linguistic States and on Adult franchise.

Apologies:-

1. The Prime Minister:-

I went to see her only to talk to her about some important problems concerning Ex-Servicemen. After this talk I showed her the full text of the PTI report only part of which had been put out in the press and which had caused so much excitement in certain quarters.

2. The Speaker of Lok Sabha:-

I saw him in his Residence only to show him the full text of the PTI report. I felt by his seeing it and by his being told the correct version of my statement it may help him to shorten the debate in the House over my statement and so save the valuable time of our Legislators to pay more urgent attention to serious incidents prevailing in certain parts of the country such as:

a) Killing innocent people for Political Reasons,
b) Destroying public property and property of the poor people,

Complete disrespect for law and order, strikes in factories impeding production thereby slowing down foreign exports losing the much needed foreign exchange indiscipline by factory workers and labourers, strikes by students affecting seriously their education, gheraos and so on.

The Speaker after seeing the full text of the PTI report and listenming to my clarification asked me if I could see the Home Minister and tell him about this. He said this would help him to answer questions in the Lok Sabha speedily with the background of correct and full information.

3. The Home Minister:-

So, I saw him in his office in Lok Sabha and told him in full, of all I had said. I pointed out that the report had seen in the press on the morning of the 10th March was all out-of-context and incomplete. I thought I had made myself quite clear to him in respect of this. I also expressed to him my resentments about the 'rejoinder' he had put out in the press on seeing the first press reports, and told him it was rude and uncomplimentary to me personally. I told him that I had not taken any umbrage at what he had said because I knew he had to say those things for political reasons. Perhaps, for the same reason too he said more uncalled for things about me during the debate in the Parliament even after I had given him the correct version of my statement. I did not go to see any of these three dignitaries to "apologise' because there was NOTHING to apologise for.

Many of my friends felt after seeing my statement in the press on 13th March that I had gone back on my suggestion that we should have a President's cum Military Rule. Unfortunately the press had not put out my views correctly. I have been saying for a long time, as the survival of our Democracy to-day was being threatened by indiscipline, lack of respect for law and order and so on we must have a President's Rule for 5 years or so. Such a rule cannot come into being under the present Constitution, and an Interim Constitution produced to enable the President to rule as above. He would have a council of 25 or so hand-picked advisers, able men and women of whom we have hundreds in our country. He should handover such states whose people have been indulging in violence, destruction, killing, indiscipline and so on causing feelings of grave insecurity to the law abiding citizens of the land, to the ARMY for administration but under his control.

I have never been in favour of Military Coups.

There can never be, nor will there ever be, a Military Coup in India for the following reasons:-

1. The country is too vast,
2. The three services are separate; Army, Navy and Air-Force each having its own Chief,
3. The heterogeneity of the Communities in the service would not be conducive to provide for a homogeneous outlook in this respect.

But I have supported, and still do support the demand of the people for a Military Rule, only as a temporary measure to put things right in the country. Military Rule can only come under two conditions:

1. If the politicians voluntarily hand over the country to the Army as was done in a neighbouring country. or
2. If the people demand such a rule, by two articles on "Democracy and India" published in the Indian Express

of 28th & 29th July 1969 - and my article on "Our Motherland" published in some papers also in 1969 - fully contain my views on this subject.

I was interested to read in the papers a few days ago in Delhi what a former Minister in Chandigarh had said about our internal situation. He is reported to have said that, in the present context of complete anarchy and fascism prevailing in some parts of the country the only solution would be to have Military Rule for a while. He is also reported to have said in the same context "General Cariappa has given a timely warning in this respect" or words to that effect.

Political Parties:-

We have in our country far too many political parties most of them dissipating the energies and finances of our people. In our Parliaments, as often reported in the press, quite a lot of time is being taken up by clashes between various political parties at the expense of dealing with urgent matters concerning the welfare and the security of our people and the country. So I have been suggesting that all present parties should be scrapped and in theirplace there should be only three main political parties equivalents of Labour, Liberal and Conservative. Call them what you like.

When law and order is restored and things are going on well in the country the President would hold a General Election. The people would go to the polls and would vote for only three main parties. Whichever party wins in this election will be the Ruling Party, the second will be the Opposition and the Third party will be the Balancing Party. A new Constitution would be framed. Thereafter the President's cum Military Rule would end and Democracy would reenter in its pure form.

Adult Franchise:-

About adult franchise, I have held these views for some years. To-day every citizen of our land is entitled to vote. A large percentage of voters are illiterate. They are easy prey to some unscrupulous politicians of the wrong type to be bribed to vote for them or their nominees. Therefore, we are not getting the best people in our country to get into politics and to run the country wisely and well. In order to ensure that we get only the best and the most fitting people into our politics, we should have a yard stick to make a person eligible to vote. This yard stick would not be possession of property but "literacy". If we have this it will bring us two dividends.

1. The voters would know who they are voting for. They may not be tempted by bribes.

2. The second dividend and it is a very big dividend. It will help to step up literacy in our country. Such citizens who will be denied the privileges of voting because of their illiteracy will be goaded to become literate. There will therefore be numerous adult schools in the country to make people literate. A great impetus will be given to ~~make people literate~~ this cause throughout the country. In a few years time the percentage of literates in India will be considerably higher.

Linguistic States:-

The formation of the Linguistic States sounded the death-knell for the unity of our country. Because of these, problems like Belgaum, Kasargod, Telangana, Chandigarh, Fazilka have come up. Many more similar ~~pp~~ problems will come in the wake of the formation of "Private Armies" called Senas in some states. Border disputes, sharing of water disputes are on the increase.

We are foreigners in our own country. In my travels round the country I find the atmosphere is not one of Indians of India but a people belonging to various separate estates of India. This is criminal. We never can progress as rapidly and as efficiently as we can unless we all belonged to one Team of Indians. I have always believed in a Unitary Government for our country. The longer the Linguistic States remain the remote are the hopes of India becoming a strong and united country to get on speedily with our nation building work for our development, to catch up with the ~~army~~ many developed countries in the world. So I have been saying and say so now "Scrap the Linguistic States." Let us divide India into zones for administrative and economic convenience on the lines of the Army, such as Army Commands, Army areas, Army sub-areas and so on. Call them by them by the equivalent civilian names. Because of these Linguistic states the education of our youth is being seriously interpreted. Many states want to haveeducation only in their own regional languages. This will not be in the best interest of our youth of to-day the leaders of tomorrow. Youth who do not belong to a particular state but who are there because of their parents being employed there will have to get back to their respective states for their education. Students will then think in terms of their own parochial interests in their states. Most harmful for the good of our country. National integration will NEVER come.

The President's cum Military Rule is not to be a permanent thing. It is to be only temporary until normalcy returns.

India belongs to the ~~common man~~. He is the most important person in our land. If he feels that a spell of President's cum Military Rule will give him security, give him better administration, a better life and so on, he has the right to demand it. I support him wholeheartedly. From my contacts with thousands of people of all shades all over India of all classes I feel certain that should there be an unfettered "Gallop-poll tomorrow in this respect, ninety per cent of our millions will vote for a President's cum Military Rule to save Democracy. So wake up our people and SPEAK.

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